Each student’s decision to enroll in a Summer (5-week) capstone course is a commitment to attaining course learning outcomes in an intensive learning and teaching experience. This course demands an uncompromising dedication to developing a real-world, comprehensive marketing strategy for a client firm. Failure to make this commitment will result in an unacceptable performance outcome.

“*The aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous*” – Peter Drucker

There is an old Latin saying “Navigare necesse est.” which translates into something like “One must sail.” In the context of this capstone marketing course, we will collectively navigate the principles and practices that underlie marketing strategy. Marketing strategy is an integral component of any organization’s business plan; other strategic issues such as asset management, production, and research and development support an organization’s business strategy. In turn, an organization’s marketing strategy must be consistent with the organization’s core competencies. So, we will evaluate how the marketing mix variables – product, pricing, promotion and placement – serve as compass points for leveraging an organization’s core competencies. These marketing mix variables are inextricably derived from the customer, and they reinforce the customer-centricity of contemporary marketing tactics and strategy. You will recall that the recognition that the customer is the nucleus of all marketing decisions is described as the **marketing concept**. Marketing metanoia represents the fundamental challenge that you will confront as an active participant in a dynamic marketplace. So, what do I mean by “metanoia”? Please consider the following:

*For the Greeks, it meant a fundamental shift or change, or more literally transcendence (“meta” -- above or beyond, as in “metaphysics”) of mind (“noia,” from the root “nous,” of mind). In the early (Gnostic) Christian tradition, it took on a special meaning of awakening shared intuition and direct knowledge of the highest, of God. “Metanoia” was probably the key term of such early Christians as John the Baptist. In the Catholic corpus, the word metanoia was eventually translated as “repent.” To grasp the meaning of “metanoia” is to grasp the deeper meaning of learning,” for learning also involves a fundamental shift or movement of mind.* - Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*

**COURSE PERSPECTIVE**

Marketing practice itself may be in a state of flux. The most cited definition of marketing was adopted more than 70 years ago by the National Association of Marketing Teachers, an association later to become the American Marketing Association (AMA). This definition was adopted by the AMA in 1948, and again in 1960 when the AMA revisited the definition and decided not to change it. This original definition stood for more than one-half century. In 2004, a new marketing definition was adopted by the American Marketing Association: “Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.” In July 2013 – nearly a decade later – the American Marketing Association refined marketing’s definition, stating that “**Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.**

Professor Robert Dolan summarizes, asserting that marketing is simply the “process via which the firm creates value for its chosen customers.” Consider the marketing mantra of Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos. "Our vision," he said,
"is to be the world's most customer-centric company. The place where people come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online." The updated definition of marketing illuminates the increased focus on a transition from a product-centric to a customer-centric approach to marketing strategy.

Philip Kotler, one of the world’s leading marketing scholars, the S.C. Johnson & Son Distinguished Professor of International Marketing at the Northwestern University Kellogg Graduate School of Management described this transition in marketing practice:

“The economic landscape has been fundamentally altered by technology and globalization. Companies anywhere can now compete anywhere, thanks to the Internet and more free trade. The major economic force is hyper-competition, namely companies are able to produce more goods than can be sold, putting a lot of pressure on price. This also drives companies to build in more differentiation. However, a lot of the differentiation is psychological, not real. Even then, a company’s current advantage doesn’t last very long in an economy where any advantage can be copied rapidly. Companies must pay attention to the fact that customers are getting more educated and have better tools such as the Internet at their disposal to buy with more discrimination. Power has been passing from the manufacturer to the distributor, and now is passing to the customer. The customer is King.”

Now, consider Kotler’s assertion cast against the backdrop of struggling sectors. For example, the airlines industry has systematically reduced consumer service, increased prices and reduced stockholder value. An overarching question that challenges today’s marketers is “How can marketing concurrently maximize customer satisfaction and stakeholder value?

TEACHING APPROACH

This course is designed to be student-centric, empowering you to take an active role in your learning outcomes through experiential exercises, in-class participation and a real-world, real-time marketing strategy project. This requires an active, rather than passive, engagement in each scheduled class session. It has been said that “Knowledge is a process of piling up facts; wisdom lies in their simplification.” In the spirit of Fischer’s assertion, this course will attempt to simplify your understanding of applied marketing problems, harnessing your collective experiences to build enduring learning outcomes. Often contrasted with didactic learning, experiential learning is not just an agglomeration of facts. It may be referred to as “auto-didacticism”; experiential learning challenges you to actively reflect on your everyday experiences. After all, you are continually engaged in the marketing system. All of you are consumers, and many of you are already involved in product, pricing, promotions and/or distribution decisions. This course will provide a learning platform for you to critically evaluate marketing principles and practices in the domain of your own experiences. One of the overarching challenges of experiential learning is separating marketing myths from marketing realities in an ever-changing global marketplace. Advertising executive David Ogilvy asserts: “I notice increasing reluctance on the part of marketing executives to use judgment; they are coming to rely too much on research, and they use it as a drunkard uses a lamp post for support, rather than for illumination.”

This course is a capstone course! Accordingly, it is your responsibility to understand the foundations of marketing, and to seek counsel (from the professor or reliable resources) any gaps in your understanding of marketing principles and practices. Each course participant should be ready to discuss a topic on the scheduled class date. There is no assigned textbook in this course; but, there will be readings and materials posted to the Blackboard Learn course web site. It is your responsibility to check the Blackboard Learn course web site before each scheduled class session.

It is imperative that you stay understand how to use Blackboard Learn, and that you fully understand that all email communications are to be made through the Blackboard Learn course web site!
PROFESSOR ACCESS

Dr. Lou E. Pelton
358-M Business Leadership Building
University of North Texas (Denton) Campus
Office (940.565.3124) | Mobile (972.333.3132)

Access & Office Hours Policy. The University of North Texas Faculty Handbook mandates that each faculty member is required to list and maintain office hours within their department so that students can have access to their professors. In the interest of serving your academic needs, I have designed a tripartite communications system.

Face-to-Face Meetings. I am available to meet with you at most times. I will hold formal office hours on Mondays, immediately after class in BLB 358M. I can also meet at other times, but I encourage you to make an appointment to ensure that you have my undivided attention. Additional office hours will be available at my office (238-M Business Administration) on the main Campus (Denton). You are welcome to stop by my office at any time; however, other professional obligations may preempt unscheduled meetings.

Email Communications. I am available via email at pelton@unt.edu and this address is accessible via Blackboard Learn mail, however, there are a great number of filters used in the University email system. Accordingly, your email may be routed to a “junk mail” folder and automatically deleted. For this reason, it is MANDATED that you use your official UNT email address. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, I recommend that you call me...

Telephone Access. I may be reached on my mobile or office telephone between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. In the event that I am unavailable, a voice mail system will instruct you on the procedures for leaving a message. Please speak slowly and clearly, and remember to leave a number where I can reach you. I will make every effort to return telephone calls within 24-hours of the message recording.

Course Policies and Procedures

Academic Integrity. Each course participant should be fully aware of the policies and guidelines for academic honesty in the University of North Texas Student Guidebook and on UNT web page (www.unt.edu). The Student Code of Conduct and an abbreviated list of other rules, regulations and policies are available from the Dean of Students. Please be sure to visit http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm in the event that you have any questions about these issues. Plagiarism is a serious compromise of academic integrity. Please be certain to cite any references used in written assignments. Materials copied verbatim must be in quotation marks with a correct citation documented within the text. This applies to any and all materials taken from Internet sites.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The College of Business Administration and Honors Program comply with the ADA, and we make every effort to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a special need in accordance with ADA guidelines, please inform me immediately. Every effort will be made to accommodate your special needs. The Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA) assists faculty members and students in addressing special needs.

Classroom Behavior: Cellular Telephones and Sound-activated Pagers. No cellular telephones and/or sound-activated pagers are permitted in class without my express written consent. I reserve the right to take away any cellular telephone/sound-activated paper if it goes off in class. Each course participant is responsible for classroom behavior that is conducive to the teaching-learning process. Each course participant should be fully aware of the policies and guidelines for academic honesty and classroom behavior discussed in the University of North Texas
Student Guidebook. The Student Code of Conduct and an abbreviated list of other rules, regulations and policies are available from the Dean of Students. Any one compromising the integrity of the learning process will receive a failing grade in this course and be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action.

Course Performance Assessment

“The highest reward for a person toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.”
-John Ruskin

I think Ruskin is correct in his assessment of the highest reward for performance. Hopefully, your greatest reward from this course will be the learning experience. Nevertheless, I have a responsibility to assign each student a grade for her/his course performance.

In this course, your grade will be based on your total accumulated points on graded assignments and attendance/participation. Final course grades will be determined by dividing your total number of accumulated points over 1,000 possible points. The following table summarizes course grade assignments:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Marketing Plan (Oral)</th>
<th>Marketing Plan (Written)</th>
<th>Final Examination (Essay Format)</th>
<th>Attendance/Participation</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1000</td>
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Performance assessment in this course will be based on the following:

- **Final Exam. [30%]** The final exam is based solely on our in-class discussions and the assigned readings. You will select two discussion platforms to articulate your understanding of applied marketing problems and solutions in a well-written, well-integrated set of essays. This is a take-home examination, and you’ll have assigned time to consider the discussion platforms before the due date.

- **Marketing Plan Project. [50%]** This is an extensive, course-long project designed for you to collectively – in a team setting – develop a comprehensive marketing plan. We will discuss this in greater length during our scheduled class session. **Every team member receives the same grade on the Marketing Plan project unless s/he fails to make a value-added contribution. Any student failing to make value-added contributions will receive a grade of zero (0), resulting in a failing grade for the course!** There are two graded components to the marketing plan project:
  - **Written Marketing Plan.** You will refer to the Marketing Plan outline in Appendix I as a general guideline for meeting the requirements of the project. However, your emphasis is on meeting the needs articulated by the client during an in-class briefing. It is imperative that you ask good questions and get as much “inside information” as possible during this client briefing. The written Marketing Plan will be assessed using the grading rubric in Appendix II.
  - **Oral Plan Presentation.** Attire is business formal for this presentation. Your team will professionally present the highlights of your Marketing Plan to the client. It may include hand-outs, audio-visual supplements or any other presentation methods/tools that will convince the client to adopt your strategy. The “judges” for the presentation will be from the client firm, Dr. Pelton and another “guest judge.”
**Attendance and Participation [20%].** Your willingness to share relevant experiences during scheduled class sessions will enrich the lecture and text materials. Attendance is required, and participation is encouraged and expected. Attendance includes both mental and physical attentiveness. Your preparedness is a significant determination of your participation grade. Attendance is recorded each and every scheduled class session! The Course Calendar is posted on the Blackboard Learn course web site.

The final letter grade reported to the Office of the Registrar is based on the following grading scale:

**Final Grades:**

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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>≤599</td>
<td>600 - 699</td>
<td>700 - 799</td>
<td>800 - 899</td>
<td>≥ 900</td>
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APPENDIX I
MARKETING PLAN OUTLINE

You are likely familiar with the proverb "He who fails to plan, plans to fail." Marketing scholars John and Martin (1984) proffered that "It is apparent from casual observation that the nature and content of marketing planning vary widely among organizations...In fact, even the nature of a delineable ‘marketing plan’ is variable, depending on the extent of integration of planning activities across functions within the organization. It may be difficult to distinguish distinct types of plans" (p.172). They propose: "what must be modeled with respect to marketing planning is the role, functioning, and contribution of the marketing area in planning in the organization" (p.171). Your team's marketing plan may benefit from such counsel.

Title Page

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Executive Summary
The Executive Summary highlights the main goals of the marketing plan and the strategies for achieving those goals. It should also briefly address both the outcomes (expectations) and caveats relative to the prescriptive guidance in the marketing plan.

• Why is the marketing plan timely and relevant for the focal client?
• What major factors impact underlie the strategic marketing plan?
• What are the expected outcomes if the marketing plan is implemented?
• What are potential caveats for which the client must be prepared?
• Why should the client adopt your plan over other alternatives?

Critical Market Intelligence
In this section of the marketing plan, you want to summarize what the client's perspective of the challenges and opportunities that impact the portfolio of market offerings. It is appropriate to challenge the assumptions, goals and other information that are part of your research. However, you should ensure that you can support your position. It should minimally address the following questions:

• What is the focal firm’s current mission and objectives, according to key informants from the organization?
• Are the challenges and objectives articulated by key informants from the client consistent or inconsistent? This is a critical issue given that your team has obtained information from multiple sources.
• What information or perspectives garnered from briefings or interviews were most important to your team’s decision process? In other words, what information really steers your marketing planning?

Market Positioning Analysis
Here, it is important to explain the organizational structure of the focal firm (client) relative to its market positioning. It is also imperative that you articulate the idiosyncrasies associated with this client. In this section, you should be sure to address the following questions:

• What are the resources, organizational structure and extant operational protocols?
• What are the challenges and opportunities that your team finds most relevant to developing a marketing plan for the client?
• What are the costs and benefits associated with the market offering(s)?
• What is the organizational health of the operation?
In your marketing plan, you may organize your analysis into a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. However, this is not mandatory. No matter how your team elects to address these issues, all four components of the SWOT should be addressed within this section.

**Competitive Analysis**

To conduct a complete competitive analysis, you first will have to propose your *proposed market positioning* for the firm -- this is your positioning strategy, not necessarily the existing positioning strategy. Then, you should have selected an exemplar firm to use as a benchmark for "best practices" as part of your support for the positioning strategy. Once you have described your normative positioning strategy, then you will evaluate the principal competitors, explaining how these competitors may provide an opportunity for market share and/or share of customer.

- What should the market positioning strategy look like given its resources and market opportunities?
- Having selected a "benchmark offering," how can the assigned client emulate some its best practices (or not)?
- You may wish to address Michael Porter’s “Five Forces” taxonomy of market competition.

**Target Marketing and Segmentation**

Here, your team should specifically identify the target market consistent with your marketing plan recommendations. That is, what should the target market segment(s) look like for client to be successful? Your team should be sure to describe the population of interest, the target segments and the profile "customer" as part of your discussion.

**Strategic Marketing Plan**

This is certainly the depth and breadth of analysis of the sector cast against your team's recommendations for recasting the market offering, and then discussing how distribution channels and promotional marketing tools will be used to increase readership and/or circulation. These are your ideas; these are not a regurgitation of the existing marketing plans (since it is clear that the client is not achieving the outcomes desired). This involves innovation, creativity and avoiding "marketing myopia" in the development of attainable marketing goals. Your goals should be consistent with the client's expectations. In your strategic marketing plan, you should address the following questions as a foundation for developing a cohesive set of tactics:

- In what ways would you change or retain the marketing offering in its current form?
- Given its current distribution channels, how would you retain, modify or overhaul the channels of distribution? This includes both physical and virtual distribution channels.
- What collaborations, cooperatives, relational exchanges or other strategic alliances might you consider as part of your strategic marketing tactics?
- What will the pricing look like for advertisers or other sources of revenues? The other sources of revenues will be critical because it may include non-traditional sources not currently considered as revenue generators for the firm.

**Implementation Activities**

This section should list the tasks required to implement each marketing strategy. For each task should include a detailed description, identify a person responsible for its completion, and set a target date for completion.

**General Budgetary Forecast**

This section should contain an expense budget for the implementation tasks and a forecast of the any revenue sources expected as a result of the marketing plan. In addition, there should be an explanation of the assumptions on which the sales forecast is based, including how it relates to the number of potential customers in the target market.
## APPENDIX II
### MARKETING PLAN Grading Rubrics

#### Oral Presentation

**Content**

| 1. | Demonstrated an understanding of the industry sector and client | |
| 2. | Proposed realistic recommendations to enhance client performance | |
| 3. | Provided relevant supporting information for recommendations | |
| 4. | Articulated a set of actions with a timeline for implementation | |
| 5. | Presented performance outcomes (metrics) that are attainable | |

#### Presentation

| 1. | Reflected professional “team” presentation skills | |
| 2. | Reflected conviction in proposed marketing plan | |
| 3. | Demonstrated appropriate audio/visual supplements | |
| 4. | Addressed questions adequately | |
| 5. | Provided a convincing argument for hiring the team | |

#### Written Presentation

| 1. | Demonstrated sufficient research and “depth” of client/sector | |
| 2. | Demonstrated a logically-developed set of recommendations | |
| 3. | Reflected proofreading and excellent written communication skills | |
| 4. | Articulated a set of actions with a timeline for implementation | |
| 5. | Was critically-integrated and reflective of synergistic team outcomes | |